

Christ Church Cathedral Vestry Minutes
February 23-24, 2024
Vestry Planning Retreat at Christ Church Cathedral

Vestry Members Present: Hal Johnson (Senior Warden), John Whitaker (Junior Warden), Susie Ries, Jay Wellons, David Morton, Ellie Gardner, David Paine, Tyler Yarbrow, Anna Grimes, Billy Ballard, Susan Barge, Sarah Tally, Donald McKenzie, Sam Bessey, Chris Isbell

Vestry Members Absent:

Clergy Present: The Rev. Vicki Burgess, the Rev. Madeleine Rebouché, the Rev. Canon Lissa Smith, the Rev. Richard Wineland, the Ven. Roger Saterstrom, the Rev. Mary McCarthy, the Rev. Anna Russell Friedman (Friday only), Bishop William Mostert

Others Present: Ellen Wright (Clerk)

Approval of January Minutes

The minutes from January's Vestry meeting were approved. (McKenzie, Tally).

Report from the Building Committee

Charlie Cook gave an update on the progress of our building project with EOA. The original committee began in 2019 and consisted of Walker Mathews, Cindy Anderson, Art Stinson, Kristin Simmons, and Steve Lasley. Walker moved off the committee in August, 2023, as Mathews Construction was chosen as the general contractor. This committee began with program requirements for square footage, based on prior work by the Strategic Planning Committee and HBRA architects. Charlie reviewed some of the history leading up to the choice of EOA and the charge to prioritize outreach, fellowship, and youth. We chose one of three options they presented, and have scaled back the original design due to its expense. Covid delayed the project. Charlie emphasized that the committee has been single minded in following priorities and keeping them front and center. They have been committed to transparency. Mathews has offered a guaranteed maximum price that is \$200K over what we expected. (Total cost will be \$18M0.) We received construction drawings in October and expect to break ground in March, as soon as our financing is approved.

Vestry Organization

Tyler reviewed the Vestry Overview document, with specific attention to the role of vestry members as liaisons to commissions. Commissions are meant to help committees, e.g. with budget requests and to streamline requests for the vestry. They provide an opportunity for discernment and collective thought before a request goes to the vestry. She referred to the Bylaws for a description of the vestry officers' responsibilities. Everyone is encouraged to read the Annual report, which is online and is intended to organize our work and provide a clear path for ministry. Other basic matters of getting organized included:

- signup sheets for vestry meeting volunteers.
- A review of staff and their jobs.
- A reminder of Realm and the need for photos of vestry members.
- A reminder of Safe Church and anti-racism training, both of which are requirements.
- Hal announced the end of the Fortnight sign ups.

Isaac Project Discussion

Vicki gave an update on the Isaac Project and framed it as an opportunity to think theologically and look at justice through the lens of the Gospel. She reminded everyone of the panel discussion upcoming on Sunday at 10:00 in the Nave. Three additional Sundays in March are also set aside for Isaac Project discussions. Susie offered copies of Reparations, a plan for Churches, and she especially recommended chapter 2. Following Prayers at the End of the Day, the meeting was dismissed on break until the morning. The meeting resumed on Saturday morning following Morning Prayer.

Holy Cow! Consulting

Elizabeth Hamilton from Holy Cow! came to discuss the results of our survey, meant to determine what we want in a transitional time. 60% of our average Sunday attendance responded to the survey, which means there is a 3% margin of error.

We are a diverse population, which is mirrored in our pattern of contribution- on average, we give 2.8% of our income (60%ile)

Demographics: 50% over 65; most drive 3- 10 miles to church (85%ile); 63% have a graduate degree (95%ile); 19% live alone.

The survey primarily looked at satisfaction (peace) and energy (compelling sense of purpose) and found that we are average in both categories. Her report was lengthy and comprehensive, not easily summarized; therefore, vestry members are referred to her complete report, which was emailed. This outlines our priorities, the profile of our congregation as regards satisfaction and energy and how to increase both, and the extent to which responses are generational. Our top 3 priorities are: growth (by

attracting new families w/young children), relationships (people are lonely since Covid, and it's generational), and growth (by reaching new folks and incorporating them into our community)

We learned that we are a very clergy focused church, which is typical for a cathedral. She cautioned that we need to own this, while being realistic about the fact that clergy are human.

Upsides to that reality: changes can happen quickly; significant growth is possible, provided the clergy have the right personality (grounded ego) and that healthy boundaries and support are in place

Downsides: anxiety, because our well being hinges on one person; conflict often focused on the clergy, and is hard to fix when things go wrong; clergy burn out or flame out

Musts: accountability, agency and leadership skills; consistent clergy support; high level conflict management skills; ability to manage anxiety about clergy changes

Culturally, we tend to be progressive and generally agree on theology (border of paraclete (advocate) and magi (intellectual) cultures).

Paraclete culture at its best: develops community, but pays attention to ritual; conversations around inclusion and hospitality; focus on ministries of healing, and often on front line work; comfortable with individual spiritual paths; sufficiently flexible in order not to become irrelevant

Dark side: complacency and rote ritual; temptation to overcommit to meeting the needs of others- burnout; struggle with conflict management and lack of healthy boundaries; need to retain focus of power of gospel to transform

Magi at its best: curiosity, journey of understanding; ally for minorities; can articulate our uniqueness

Downside: overthink issues and try to be everything to everyone; don't give proper weight to role of emotion in generating enthusiasm; need to focus on relational and emotional aspects of actions

Some additional takeaways:

- One third of respondents attend less regularly than 3 years ago; need to try to find out why; maybe a good place for “holy conversations”
- Everyone is focused on relationships, but this is particularly important to those in the 35-64 yo group and less important to those under 35
- Education is important across the board, but less so for those under 35
- Families are most important to those who are coming less than they did 3 years ago; this is also important to those under 35

- Desire for physical plant improvement largely within frequent attendees and those over 65
- Outreach most important to the 35-64 year olds and those who attend regularly
- Compared to other similar churches, we score relatively low on the hospitality scale (which is the #1 indicator of growth, so we need to improve)
- Compared to other similar churches, we score high on worship and music
- We believe that the most important abilities for the next Dean are preaching and strategic leadership capability; when compared to other similar churches, we have a higher expectation for teaching/training ability and administrative capacity; Elizabeth cautioned that we need to make sure that he/she has conflict resolution ability and is a community catalyst.

Big Picture: Elizabeth would love to see the congregation as a whole to look to each other and to themselves to be involved and as a community builder; we need to identify the brick walls to involvement.

Commission Liaisons

Administration (chair, Donald McKenzie): Sarah Tally, Susan Barge

Cathedral Life (chair TBA): David Paine

Christian Formation (chair Mary Margaret Sprinkle): Ellie Gardner

Evangelism (chair Maura Sullivan): Anna Grimes

Liturgy (chair Andrea Tucker): Donald McKenzie

Outreach (chair David Morton): Susie Ries

Parish Life (chair Deaver Collins): Billy Ballard, Susan Barge

Pastoral Care (chair Mary McCarthy): Sam Bessey, Jay Wellons

Chris Isbell will remain the liaison to the Isaac Project.

Calendar Planning

Vestry Meeting Dates:

March 18*

April 22

May 20*

June 24

July 22

August 26

September 23

October 28
November 25
December 16*
January 27, 2025

* denotes meetings that are not on the fourth Monday (accommodations for Easter, Memorial Day, Christmas)

Commision reports:

March: Christian Formation
April: Pastoral Care
May: Outreach
July: Isaac Project
August: Christian Formation
September: Cathedral Life
October: Parish Life
November: Liturgy
December: Evangelism
January: Administration

Cathedral Chapter Meetings:

April 3, June 5, December 11, 12:15-2:30 p.m.

Upcoming Dates to Note

Business Meeting:

Led by Hal Johnson, Senior Warden.

The LGBTQ+ faith alliance (under the Christian Formation commission) welcome statement was presented, with some explanation and questions, largely centered on whether the statement should specifically include the laity. The decision to accept it passed unanimously, with the suggestion that they be asked to consider making the statement inclusive of all laity. (Paine, Ballard)

The 200th anniversary of the church is coming up in 2029. Volunteers are needed. Tyler mentioned a published history of the church as one idea.

David Morton reported that the Grants committee recommends that the Easter offering be designated for a latrine style bathroom at the school at Boc Banique, Haiti. There is an anonymous gift of \$2500 in place. Estimated cost is \$10-14K. Unanimously approved. (Bessey, Ballard)

2017 Strategic Plan report:

We were reminded of the vestry retreat in 2017, during which a strategic plan committee was appointed. We are now at the end of the plan's 7 years, and we have accomplished the capital campaign and building project. Some additional initiatives were met; some were not. Now seems like a good time to bless the plan and move on. Hal showed the brochure. Tyler reassured the group that we will continue parish partnerships, and she proposed a Resolution: *Resolved*, as 7 yrs have now passed since the adoption of the Strategic Plan and as we now find ourselves in a new moment of transition and discernment for our future, that the Vestry acknowledges that much was achieved in pursuit of the goals identified in the Strategic Plan adopted by the Vestry on February 3, 2017, but that it is time to formally sunset the Strategic Plan and look ahead to creating a new vision for our parish community. It is further resolved that the Vestry affirms its commitment to the congregational partnerships forged and nourished in furtherance of the goals identified by the Strategic Plan. (Yarbro, Bessey) Unanimously passed.

Cathedral Documents:

Tyler reviewed the Bylaws (from 2012) and Cathedral Agreement (1995) as our church's agreement with the Diocese as to how we will operate as a cathedral. Both Tyler and Vicki highlighted specific sections in the Bylaws and Agreement that deal with the various rights and obligations of the dean and rector and the vestry, including the vestry's role in calling a new dean and rector and the role of the Bishop in that process. Vicki pointed out that the Diocesan Canons and Nat'l Church canons have to be taken along with the Bylaws, in order to discern the job of an interim priest.

Cathedral Chapter:

Tyler reminded us of the membership makeup and the function of the chapter in planning diocesan services. Jay Wellons and Susie Ries were nominated to serve, in addition to the Vestry officers. (Yarbro, Johnson). Unanimously approved. Meeting dates for 2024 are: Apr. 3, June 5, and Dec. 11, from 12:15- 2:30 p.m.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures:

The following conflicts of interest were disclosed: David Morton, Room In the Inn Board, Chris Isbell, Board of Urban Bicycle Food Ministry; Walker Mathews is on the Finance

committee and is the builder for the new addition; Pete stringer is a banker at First Horizon (Cathedral bank), treasurer of the diocese and on the Episcopal Endowment Corporation; Ellen Wright is the acting Chair of the Board at Episcopal School of Nashville (ESN); Dale Maxfield is on the Finance committee at ESN.

Banking Documents:

Hal reviewed the January Income and Expense statements, which were approved as presented (Bessey, McKenzie) and the balance sheet, also approved as presented (Tally, Yarbro). The capital campaign finance report was given, with some discussion of rent paid by HRI..

The following resolution for approval of check signers was approved unanimously (McKenzie, Ballard):

Resolved, to approve Hal Johnson as a check signer on the general fund account, capital campaign account, and clergy discretionary funds for Vicki, Madeleine, Lissa, Roger, Anna Russell, Mary, and Richard.

Adjournment

After prayers for the evening, the retreat was adjourned for photographs.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen Wright, clerk